1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

301 they have similar necklets of little sections of wood or of seeds. The middle-aged and particularly the young have now made up for any former lack of beads by going to the opposite extreme in the profusion and variety of their ornaments. They have borrowed [177] freely from the fashions of the Jhorias and Murias on the one side and on the other from the Bison-horn Marias, but in an eclectic way, and showing marked individual taste. They have no use for the humming-top shaped greenish-yellow glass or the tubular scarlet beads so popular with the Bison-horn Maria, nor for the small speckled beads which Czecho-Slovakia is now sending to the bazaars of the north; they like small primary coloured beads of the old 'hundreds and thousands' type, but large enough to be threaded with ease, while their women still prefer the large, almost cylindrical but rounded-edge pure white beads of uneven size that seventy years ago were the fashion among the Marias of the plains. On the whole the women have borrowed mostly from the Bison-horn fashions, and the men from those of the north, particularly the Jhorias. On their arms the men have tight-fitting armlets of brass or 'jarman' (an aluminium alloy) just above their elbows, from one to five in number. Round their necks they have up to six collars of coloured beads sometimes six-deep, arranged according to individual colour tastes, but generally in vertical bars of colour with alternate bars of white. From large ear-rings 4 or 5 cm. in ● [304] diameter worn in a slit-hole pierced in the cartilage just below the helix and above the front upper insertion point of the auricle, hang nearly to the shoulders tassels made of three or four strings of beads threaded singly with a similar colour arrangement, ending with little tufts of bright wool; and fillets of the same bead-work are worn either loosely over the forehead and temples, or higher round the crest of the head, or looped from ears to hair-tuft. The intricacy and symmetry of the bright bead-work produces very pleasing patterns; the 'girl friend' usually arranges the beads for the youth. Older men more often wear small brass chains round the ears and hair-tuft than bead fillets. The large ring already referred to is first made in the form of a crescent blade of aluminium alloy, one of the tapered ends being passed through the slit-hole in the cartilage and hooked into the loop formed by bending the other tapered end to form a little eyelet, the remaining metal being then whipped spirally round the metal from which it tapered. Sometimes smaller rings of the same type are made of brass, a blue or red glass bead being threaded just inside the eyelet, and worn in a hole in the 304 tragus of the ear, or the antitragus. Innumerable holes are pierced 301 through the fold of the helix, in which are worn little rings of thin, plain brass wire; there may even be a double row of these right

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

round the whole helix, giving a total of over forty for the ear, and making it green with verdigris. These are called *maqqawadang*. The lobe is pierced and a plug of wood or a rolled leaf worn in it by those who cannot afford something more ornate or are old-fashioned; others fit on to the wooden plugs, by means of a hollow brass socket-stalk, brass circles about 15 mm. in diameter made by the Ghasias by *cire-perdue* process, ornamented with spiral whorls or concentric circles, or like little shields bossed at the centre. Some wear, instead of these, a ring of thick brass or even silver or gold, heavy and fitting closely around the end of the lobe. Lobe ear-rings or plug ornaments are generally called *porskeng*. The effect of these is greatly to distend the lobe. A few rings are worn on the fingers, generally a treble spiral of brass, or a plain aluminium band; the Jhorias are fond of Ghasia-made rings with small brass pellet-bells, but few Hill Marias wear these rings, though many hill women wear strings of such bells round their necks; they also are made by *cire perdue*. It is amusing to see the Hill Maria women haggling with Ghasia women for these bells and other brass ornaments at Dhaurai bazaar. A comb or two, and perhaps a cheap Japanese mirror, stuck in his hair, complete the finery of a young Hill Maria.

The woman wears perhaps one or two bead collars, and sometimes seven or eight bead fillets, as well as bead tassels depending from the lobes of her ears, or from a smaller cartilage-ring of the type already described. She has also ear-plugs with small brass circular plate heads in her lobes, and sometimes little plugs in one or both of her nostrils. She, like the men, wears *maqqawadang* wire rings in the helices of her ears. Round her neck she has ropes of the large white uneven beads already referred to, sometimes ending in a short single string of beads with one or two brass pellet-bells at the bottom. The ropes vary in length, the longest reaching her navel. Over these and the coloured bead collars she has large iron neck hoops or *suta* in Bison-horn Maria style, on which brass rings may be threaded of any number up to 100 or more. She is fond also of necklets of brass circles made by *cire perdue* with spiral whorls like the ear-plug caps; a few plain iron and aluminium hoops may complete her neckware. The beads hang between her breasts, but partially cover them when worn in profusion. On her wrists she has a number of loose bracelets of cylindrical aluminium and brass, and, when she dances, dancing anklets on both legs, arched over her ankle-bones. Her carved and ornamented combs at the top or side of her hair bun add to her finery. Needless to say, much of this ironmongery and brassware is left in the house when she is working in the fields, but she would not be without any of it when she sets off on her long treks to the markets in the plains. Seen

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify persons in the next world; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans, or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

cotton material cut in European style; or instead of these has at least an extra round or two of his loin-cloth which he can throw loosely over his shoulder, or a small cotton sheet to answer the same purpose.

The women's loin-cloth is worn like that of their men, but in front is not knotted in such a way as to make a long flap necessary to cover the front of their thighs; it looks, therefore, like a short skirt from their waists to just above their knees. In the fields and jungles and in their own homes they still go with their breasts uncovered save for their masses of ornaments; but they have become somewhat self-conscious, owing to misguided officials suggesting that it was improper for them to appear like this before their Chief or at high officials' camps; and they frequently, when going to a bazaar or festival, or to dance at a wedding or camp, start off with their breasts loosely covered with a cotton sheet or one or two folds of their loin-cloth wrapped loosely from one hip over the opposite shoulder, their beads and finery resting on top of this cloth. Generally, however, the cloth is too small or too loosely thrown over the body really to conceal the breasts. They have this favourite riddle :—

'Bara patte lois keren konda podo',

meaning, 'What is the pair of bullocks that cannot be confined within the byre of the twelve parts of the body?' to which the answer is '*Dūdo*', or 'Woman's breasts'. They explained this as referring to the refusal of the breasts to be concealed by any wrap. Moreover, as soon as women warm to the dance they rapidly divest themselves of the unwonted wrap.

Most men now wear a *pagri* or turban, tied in the usual fashion of the Hindu population of the adjacent Chhattisgarh districts, and far more ample than the rag worn by the Hill Marias. They do not adorn it with feathers; nor do they wear bead chains or fillets on their heads like the Hill Marias. They use far fewer ornaments; they do not wear the brass wire *maggawalang* rings in the helix of the ear, but sometimes a single small ring like the tasselled ring of the Hill Marias, but worn in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, from which a small gilt chain depends. In the lobe a small ear plug of gold or gilded brass, often with a little red or green stone or glass set in it, may anchor two or three gilt chains fastened at the top to a similar plug vertically above it in the helix. Most men content themselves with one or two small bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape, scarlet or royal blue tubular glass, or pale green humming-top-shaped, both kinds considerably larger than the Hill Marias'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

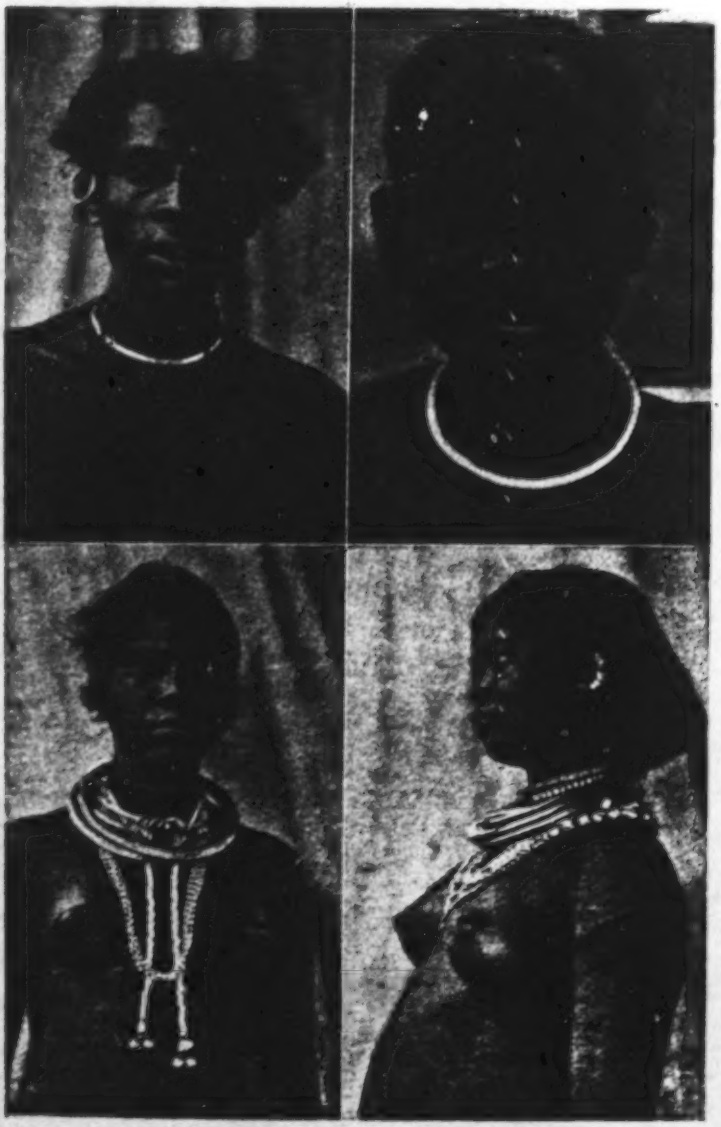
301 favourite beads. They are fond also of necklaces of small, brightly gilded beads, which they call *mirako-mungya*. They may wear one or two armlets (*danda-bhata*) on one arm above the elbow, or a pair of bracelets on one wrist (*ka'i-bara*), of silver, brass, or aluminium, and similar in type to those bought by the Hill Marias. They wear a plain waist-cord (*para-nori*) instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. A comb is attached to this, for regular use. They may have hanging from a fastener of aluminium wire, shaped like the eye of the hooks-and-eyes of ladies' dresses, two thin aluminium toothpicks, and an aluminium ear-scoop; the Hill Marias also use these. They hang like a pendant on the chest.

The women's hair ornaments have been described along with their hair-dressing; it need only be added here that occasionally, instead of the polished brass fillet there mentioned, they wear bead fillets like those of the Hill Maria women. Armlets and wristlets are worn on the same arm, and are similar to those of the hill women. Instead of the white-bead ropes and the coloured-bead collars worn by the hill women, they wear long ropes of red, red and green, or gamboge beads; and over these they wear a vast number of the iron and brass rings of the type already described as borrowed by the hill women from them; they here call the iron neck-rings *tiya*, not *suta* as in the hills. Their ear plugs are similar to those 301 used in the hills, but from the lobe plug to a ring worn, as by their ●304 men, in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, is often fastened a cord on which is threaded between two blue or green beads a slightly oblong, cube-shaped bead of brass or aluminium. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold or gilt rings in the wing of each nostril, and, between them, hanging from a small ring in the septum, a small gold or gilt ornament like a leaf pointing downwards, sometimes with a piece of red glass set in the middle.

292 I have taken the wearing of the Bison-horn dancing head-dress as the most obvious distinction between the two kinds of 'Marias'.
535 **Dancing-dress** This is known as a *tallagulla*. I had one made from horns and peacock feathers supplied by me. After my head had been measured round the plane of the temples, a basketry 'cap' was made, fitting loosely round the brows, and sloping backwards and upwards into a low peak. It is made loose, 294 as it has to support the horns and the plume of feathers, as well as strings of cowries and many folds and streamers of cloth of various colours, which subsequently tighten it and make it fit snugly round the head. The basketry is of twilled bamboo strips running diagonally from the edge that fits over the brows. The bison-horns were pared with a sharp knife to remove outer dirt or callosities and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVII



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304

HILL MARIA TYPES

Above Arki Baiyya of Korawaya — Gecha Poia of Chudala Tondawada
Below Jugho Buke of Itulnar — Guma Ewado of Goti

[Facing p. 226]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII

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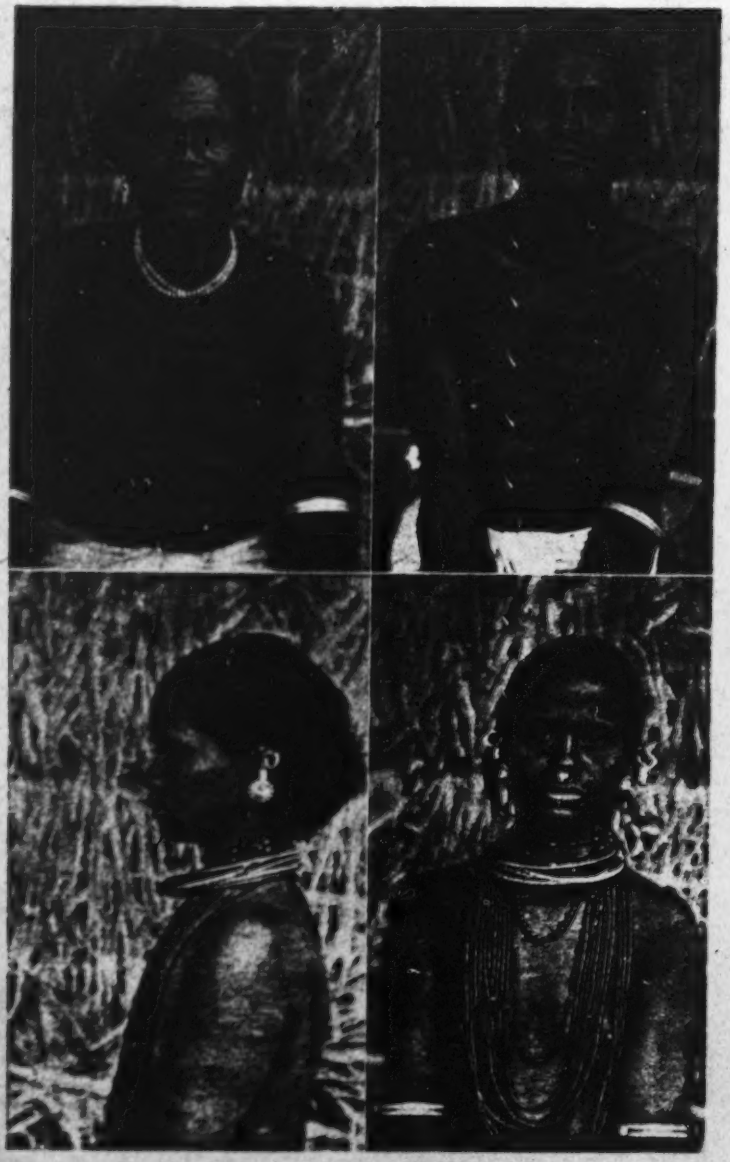

BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum
Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[facing p. 240]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
304

585

The pouring of water over the bridegroom and bride at the Bison-horn Maria wedding described at p. 258

An old Bison-horn Maria from Gudra, between Katakalian and Kuakonda

[*face p.* 254

[facing p.254]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[883] 177 him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

291 ●304 'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

632 This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
302
224

Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhopal

142
301
304

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
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304

Hill Maria children

[Verrier Elwin

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Muchaki Kondi, Bison-horn Maria girl, of Borgum

[Verrier Elwin

[End Plate F]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

301
304
854

[Verrier Elwin

Jugho Chero, of Itulaar, shown in Plate VI (*facing p. 70*), photographed ten years later

[End Plate Q]

1

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[953] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

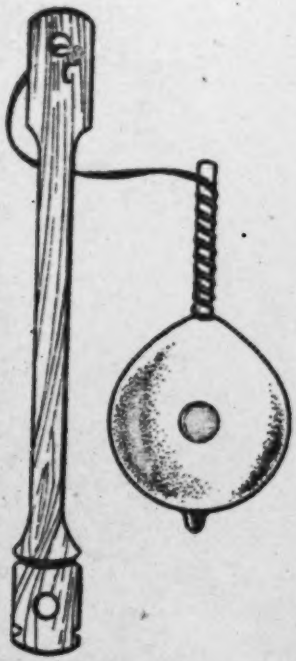

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8¾"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

304 The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

that girls should be tattooed before marriage and if possible before they are betrothed. If a girl is not done till after marriage, her parents-in-law can demand the cost from her own parents. There is some idea that the marks are a sort of passport to heaven. 'If she dies without being tattooed, Mahapurub will punish her. But if she brings him beautiful drawings from the Middle World, he will keep her with him and look after her.'

In the western parganas the tattooing is often done by a girl's own mother or by some elderly woman of the tribe. A crude needle is made out of the brass wire used for an ear-ornament and charcoal dust is mixed with til or mahua oil. In the central and eastern areas, however, most of the tattooing is done by wandering Ojha women.[1] These are the wives of semi-aboriginal professional musicians. They have various stories to account for the origin of tattooing which, as we should expect, are generally Hindu in tone. In Narayanpur the Ojha described how

> At the beginning of the world there was no caste distinction among mankind. Mahapurub decided to divide men up into castes by giving them appropriate presents. A man who was given a net became a fisherman; a man who was given a plough became a Gond; a man who was given a pen became a Brahmin. At last Mahapurub found that he had given away everything except a drum, and he looked round to see who would take it. A number of men were passing along the road and one of them was lagging behind the others. Mahapurub gave him the drum telling him that his name was henceforth to be Ojha, and thus the caste began.
>
> The Ojha now began to earn his living by wandering from village to village beating his drum, telling stories and begging. One day when he went home in the evening his food was not ready and he beat his wife saying, 'All day I go from place to place earning our living; you stay at home doing nothing and yet you cannot even cook my food'. The woman replied, 'I go to the tank for water, I fetch wood from the forest, I clean the house, I cook the food. What other work am I supposed to do?' In the manner of women she began to sulk, saying to herself that she would only eat what she earned. After she had fasted for eight days Budi Matal's carpet began to shake and she sent her messenger to find out what was the matter. The messenger took the Ojha woman to the goddess. 'I have no work to do and so my husband beats me', said the Ojha woman. Budi Matal replied, 'Very well, I will give you special work to do, provided you always worship me'. She took the Ojha woman to the forest and found a sarai tree; she removed some of the gum and put it on a bit of earthenware, covering it with another bit. Then she smeared both pieces with cow-dung and put them on a fire. After a little while she removed the lid and found a black deposit there. She scraped this off with a bit of wood and put it in the broken half of a coconut shell. Into this she put some water and stirred it well. She fixed three needles in the knot of a bamboo and made the Ojha woman lie down with one cheek to the ground. So she tattooed her. Afterwards she washed the place with cow-dung and rubbed in oil and haldi.

[1] In their article 'Ojha' Russell and Hiralal do not mention tattooing as one of the Ojha's activities.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296ff. The name is applied to the soothsayers and minstrels of several tribes, but the Ojha of Bastar are probably of Gond origin. There were 137 Ojha in Bastar in 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773
304

Then said the Matal, 'I have done this for you but you yourself must do more than this. First of all tattoo, then wash the place with cow-dung, then sprinkle haldi oil and offer rice in my name. Then holding the needles and some haldi and pulse in your right hand, catch hold of the first fingers of the woman you have tattooed in your left hand and with your right make three passes round her body. Put the haldi and pulse in her sari and let her go. By this means the burning of the marks will be cooled.'

At Palari in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Ojha gave a different version of their origin. Here they described how

Bara Deo was the son of Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai. He had six brothers and seven sisters. One day the seven sisters went to Tallur Muttai and asked her for ornaments such as would last even after death. Kadrengal gave Bara Deo a dhol and a dhamru drum. Then two sons were born to Bara Deo. One was called Murha and the other Ojha. Bara Deo taught Murha to beat the dhol with wooden sticks on the ground. Because he beat with wood on the ground Murha became a ploughman but Ojha played his dhamru slung from his shoulder, and spent his life hunting and drawing patterns on the walls of houses.

In this way the Ojha's wife learnt how to tattoo and once a year the Ojha gives a goat to Bara Deo saying, 'Behold, we go all over the world tattooing. From the marks we make let there be no wound, no pus, no swelling. Let no evil magic attack us as we work.' Because of this, Bara Deo lives with the Ojha and no witch can injure them at the time of tattooing.

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386

The method of tattooing is still today very much what is supposed to have been taught the first Ojha woman by Budi Matal. Lamp-black, charcoal, pounded incense is mixed with either castor, til or mahua oil. This is put in the broken half of an earthen pot, covered, and burnt over a lamp or a small fire. The black deposit is removed with a shell and kept in a small pot or bit of coconut.

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The Ojha woman makes a pen of bamboo and draws the desired pattern on the skin. Then with three or four needles she pricks in the black colour. Before beginning she takes the names of the Seven Sisters of Bara Deo. At the end she receives from her victim's relatives rice, haldi, oil, chillies and salt. This she waves round the girl and sometimes performs the little rite with the needles that I have already described. She offers part of what she has received to the Seven Sisters. This helps the pricks to cool quickly and not hurt too much.

Muria girls are tattooed on the forehead, chin, arms and the calves of the legs. Most of the patterns are conventional—squares, triangles, and lozenges. Sometimes you may see two little figures representing a chelik and a motiari. There is no magical significance or even special meaning in the marks. 'It is for pleasure', say some Muria; others declare that it is simply a decoration, but a permanent one. 'Your words', a girl may whisper to her chelik, 'will remain like the tattoo marks on my breast.'[1]

[1] It is curious to find Crawley saying that it is 'erroneous' to attribute the painful processes of tattooing, boring and scarification to the desire for ornament. 'There is ample evidence that "savage mutilation" is never due to this desire; the savage does not hold with the maxim—*il faut souffrir pour être belle.*' This evidence is not given, but Crawley insists that tattooing and other mutilations are for the protection of the parts affected from supernatural dangers. I doubt if this is so in India.—E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 168ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

304 There are not generally any taboos on a girl during the day that she is tattooed, but in Kokori I found that a girl was not allowed to go to the
522 ghotul the following night. This is probably a practical rule made because the girl is likely to be in some pain on that day. But when a girl does return to the ghotul after her tattooing the boys laugh at her and make the old joke about *godan* and *chodan*. 'If you could bear the pricks of *godan* (tattooing) surely you won't be afraid of the pricks of *chodan* (intercourse).' The girl naturally says that she cannot bear either. Then her boy may say, 'Look, there is pain when one is being tattooed, but in intercourse there is nothing but fun', and the girl replies, 'Well, if a mountain were to fall on me I would die, but if you fall on me I suppose I shall go on living, so you had better do what you want'. This conversation was recorded at Padbera.

314 There are a few songs about tattooing. One is in the nature of a prayer to
539 cool the pain of the marks.

Arji binthi mān hamāra.	Listen to our prayer.
Us dinki bachan tumāra.	Yours is the promise we made that day.
Sujiki jhār uthāra.	Let the burning of the needles cease.

Two other songs are sung during the 'tattooing' of the *kalsa*-pot during a wedding. The first has a refrain continually repeated, *Main wāna godendā āya*, 'Mother, I want to be tattooed'.

1

God jāle godende nuni.	If you wish, you may be, daughter.
Kon rājcho gogin nuni?	What land has the Gogin come from, daughter?
Dongarcho gogin āya.	The Gogin is from Dongar, mother.
Duār barhāte rale āya,	I was sweeping the yard,
Jabre wasala āya	She forced me to sit down.
Main nahin bol le āya.	I said I wouldn't, mother.
Kitro kitro mole re nuni?	How much did you pay her, daughter?
Nito āgar dugāni wo āya.	Double the usual sum, mother.

2

Aga bagādāng dumki dai?	Where do the tattooers come from?
Raigarh da dumking dai.	From Raigarh they come.
Aga baga wātāng dai?	Why have they come here?
Singār koti wātāng dai.	They have come to tattoo you.
Singār koti punong dai.	They don't know how to tattoo.
Danda mola kintāng dai?	What is their charge for tattooing the arm?
Huj tāsi punong dai.	They don't know how to use the needles.
Māt mola hewom dai.	We won't pay their wages.
Māt koti hewāk dai,	If they would let us do it,
Māt singār hoterom dai.	We would tattoo ourselves.[1]

[1] The Bison-horn Maria regard tattooing as a comparatively modern innovation, intended mainly as a means of attraction. The work is still done chiefly by the Maria themselves: they make needles of thorns and the colour is made by mixing the ash of pothar bark, date palm or myrabolams with mahua oil. Lamp-black is also used.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria everywhere are at the mercy of the merchants in the bazaar, though these are not entirely indifferent to popular demand. They supply cheap aluminium armlets and anklets, glass and lac bangles, aluminium and silver neck-bands, the *kawal* necklaces of rupees known throughout Central India, and many varieties of beads. Muria chelik and motiari buy these in the bazaars and wear them. They indicate nothing except perhaps the way in which the natural taste and intelligence of the aboriginals is degraded in the interests of big business. 301 439

We may now turn to the special ornaments worn by the Muria in the different fashion areas I have named. We will begin with the Jhoria, for these are the most distinctive and interesting of all the Muria. 301

The Jhoria, as we have seen, are simply Hill Maria who have settled in the foothills. You can distinguish a Maria from a Jhoria girl by her breasts so charmingly displayed and the tattoo marks less charmingly marring the beauty of her face. It is not so easy to distinguish between a Jhoria chelik and a young Hill Maria boy. [304]

Like the Hill Maria, the Jhoria give the impression of being a little over-dressed.[1] They are 'dolled up', smart, tight, fresh, alert, vivacious—altogether charming. Their clothes are worn tightly round their bodies, revealing the grace and energy of the figure. Their ornaments and especially their necklaces do not hang about them, but are drawn tight round their heads and necks. The feathers in their hair give them the perky bright appearance of young birds.

Most striking of all are their gaily coloured bead decorations. They wear head-bands, sometimes three or four of them, round the head, keeping the hair in place. Round the neck are two or more broad bead collars and a profusion of necklaces; their beautiful and elaborate designs are fully illustrated in the colour plates in this book.

Jhoria boys and girls wear ear-pendants of coloured beads (Fig. 64): some girls also wear large circular shields (*dhār*) without the usual chains, or home-made wooden *hiwa* (Fig. 73) covered with silver paper.

Bangles are not made by the Muria, and those worn by boys or girls are the usual bazaar products.

Rings play an important part in ghotul life. A boy or girl on being appointed to high office is presented with a ring: at a marriage the bride and bridegroom give rings to their old companions: a ring is buried in front of the Gaita's house before a Deo-Dandar or Pen Kolang expedition and is later given to the leader of the dance: rings are collected at a festival and offered to the clan-god. [585]

The rings are of brass or aluminium: some are decorated with little bells (Fig. 17). Girls often wear a great many which the boys beg them to remove before beginning the massage.

Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with thick bunches of cowries,[2] and balls of red and green wool. Both chelik and motiari love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears.

The Jhoria chelik wear cowrie belts just above their loin-cloths. There seems no shortage of these; they may be found everywhere. Sometimes the son of well-to-do people wears a broad silver *hawlan*, bought in the bazaar, of a kind used by girls.

[1] The word is W. V. Grigson's; it exactly describes my own impression—if such a phrase can be applied to people who hardly wear any clothes at all.

[2] For the use of cowries, almost universal in Bastar, see my article 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII (1942), pp. 121–4.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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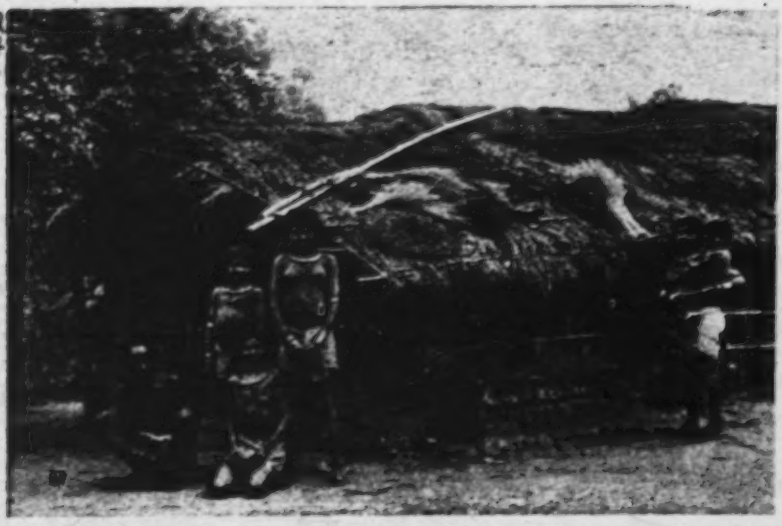

Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife

142
301
304

Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]